

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF EDUCATION

BULLETIN, 1925, No. 18

PROGRESS IN KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

By

NINA C. VANDEWALKER
ASSOCIATE SPECIALIST IN KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION
BUREAU OF EDUCATION

(Advance sheets from the Biennial Survey of Education in
the United States, 1922-1924)



WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1925

ADDITIONAL COPIES
OF THIS PUBLICATION MAY BE PROCURED FROM
THE SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D. C
AT
5 CENTS PER COPY

PROGRESS IN KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

By NINA C. VANDEWALKER

Associate Specialist in Kindergarten Education, Bureau of Education

CONTENTS.—Increase in kindergarten enrollment—Better adjustment of kindergarten to the school—Progress in teacher-training—Kindergarten legislation—New kindergarten literature—New lines of interest and effort.

INTRODUCTION

Marked progress has been made in the field of kindergarten education during the period from 1922 to 1924. This is shown in the continued increase in the enrollment in the kindergartens of the country; the better adjustment of the kindergarten to the school as a whole; the improvement in the training of kindergarten teachers; and the marked increase in the output of literature bearing on the subject.

I. INCREASE IN KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

During the period from 1920-1922 the number of children enrolled in the kindergartens of the United States showed an increase of 44,881. This brought the total enrollment to 555,830. Of this number 500,807 were enrolled in the public-school kindergartens and 55,023 in those "other than public." During the period from 1922-1924 the number enrolled was 617,373, which was an increase of 61,573. Of these, 562,897 were in the public schools and 54,456 in those of the other type. This was a falling off of 567 in the latter type of kindergartens. The greater increase during the period from 1922-1924 shows that the progress is cumulative. The estimated number of children of 4 and 5 years in the United States for 1920 was 4,765,661. The number enrolled in kindergartens was 11.7 per cent of that number. The estimated number for 1922 is 4,848,902. The increase in the enrollment for 1922-1924 has raised this to 12.7.

In the degree of progress made in each biennium there are marked differences among the States. In 1919-20, for example, the gain of 37,811 for both public and private kindergartens represented 32 States. The aggregate gain of 44,881 in 1920-1922 represented 39 and the District of Columbia. The gain of 61,373 in 1922-1924

represents 39 States and the District of Columbia. The States having gains and losses differ to some extent from year to year. In 1921-22, for example, the States having the greatest numerical gains in enrollment were, respectively: Missouri, 5,849;¹ New York, 5,497; Ohio, 3,696; California, 3,656. In 1922-1924 the list differed in some measure as to the States and the increases in each. They are: California, 14,666; New York, 6,048; Michigan, 5,772; Ohio, 5,732; Massachusetts, 3,862. A number of States report larger increases than usual. Pennsylvania has a gain of over 3,000; Illinois, Iowa, and Texas gains of over 2,000; and nine other States—Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Wisconsin—gains of over 1,000 each.

The States also fluctuate in the matter of losses in kindergarten enrollment. Those that reported losses in 1920-1922 were Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Iowa, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, and Virginia. These losses in the Western States were not surprising, in view of the agricultural depression in these States. The losses reported in 1922-1924 were in Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Missouri,¹ Montana, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Utah. It is worth noting that but one State, Montana, reports losses for both years. Since the kindergarten gained but a slight foothold in the South for many years, the gains in the Southern States are deserving of special comment. In 1920-1922 all these States showed gains except Virginia. In 1924 Virginia also showed a gain, but Louisiana and North Carolina showed losses. Of these States, the four having the highest gains were Florida, 1,430; Georgia, 1,536; Maryland, 1,613; and Texas, 2,581. A study of the public-school kindergartens and those other than public would doubtless show differences in the groupings and in the changes from year to year, but the general character of the statistics would be much the same. A comparison of the statistics for 1922-1924 with those of 1920-1922 shows the following facts: That the number of school systems having kindergartens has increased from 1,203 to 1,477; that the number of children enrolled has increased from 555,830 to 617,373; the number of kindergartens from 8,889 to 9,813; and the number of teachers from 11,842 to 12,958.

II. BETTER ADJUSTMENT OF THE KINDERGARTEN TO THE SCHOOL

The improvement in the adjustment of the kindergarten to the school is evident, but it has been a matter of progressive development and can not easily be marked off into definite periods. In the

¹ The abnormal gain reported for Missouri in 1920-1922 was clearly erroneous. It is probable that no decrease occurred in that State in 1922-1924.—Editor.

early years of the movement the kindergarten was in the school, but not of it in the sense that its work had a definite relation to that of the grades to follow. There was a definite reason for this. The kindergarten illustrated a conception of education quite new at the time, that of the guidance of children's interests and activities at the successive stages of their development. Its work was therefore in marked contrast to that of the primary grades, which was still conceived of as the mastery of the tools of learning. This made the unification of the work of the two difficult.

THE NEW EDUCATIONAL AIMS THE BASIS FOR UNIFICATION

The advance in psychology in recent years has made great changes in educational theory and practice, and the conception of education as the guidance of children's interests and activities is being gradually accepted as the true one, not for the kindergarten only but, in a greater or less degree, for the school as a whole. In consequence, many changes have been made in the organization and equipment of the elementary school in recent years. Not only have such subjects as play and games, music, and art in its several aspects, been added to the curriculum, but playgrounds, gymnasiums, workshops, and art studios have been provided in order that the work in these subjects might be as effective as possible. The methods, too, have been changed to allow opportunities for initiative and self-expression. Since the new lines of work were of the active type the value of the kindergarten, whose work is largely active, became more apparent. The better knowledge of the child's development which these changes imply made corresponding changes in the kindergarten necessary, as it showed the play material devised by Froebel to lack the qualities that such material should possess. In consequence, there has been a change in the kindergarten materials; the small articles, such as sticks, rings, pricking and sewing cards, and fine weaving mats have been discarded or replaced by larger ones. Building blocks of several kinds are particularly favored to take their place. In this way the working material in the kindergarten and that in the grades have become more nearly alike.

These changes in the kindergarten and primary grades are based upon the recognized fact that the years from 4 to 8 constitute one psychological period, and that, in consequence, the work of the kindergarten and the first and second grades should be of the same general character.

KINDERGARTEN-PRIMARY SUPERVISION A MEANS TO MORE EFFECTIVE UNIFICATION

The unification of the kindergarten and the first grade has been in progress in individual schools and individual communities for several years, but conditions have prevented its complete success. The

pros and cons of the kindergarten have, in fact, been the subject of many discussions, personal and professional, and these have doubtless contributed materially to an understanding of its value. If the work of a school is to be so organized that the work of the kindergarten is to serve as a real basis for that of the first grade, the work of both must be organized to that end.

The appointment of a kindergarten-primary supervisor is one of the means to that end. Such supervisors are relatively new, but the number is rapidly increasing. A study of kindergarten supervision, made by the Bureau of Education in 1918, showed that there were at that time kindergarten supervisors in 131 cities, and the statement was made that "in some instances the supervisor of kindergartens is also the supervisor of primary grades." This implied that the supervision of both kindergarten and primary grades by the same person was unusual. At present 159 cities provide kindergarten supervision in some form. Ten of these have had such supervision for the past year only. In 100 cities the supervision covers both the kindergarten and the primary grades. In 7 of these the supervisors were originally kindergarten supervisors only, but became kindergarten-primary supervisors the past year. In 7 cities the supervision includes the supervision of the kindergarten and all the elementary grades. In 5 the supervision is done by the assistant superintendent.

The 12 largest cities vary in their type of supervision. In 4, Baltimore, Detroit, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, the supervisors are kindergarten-primary supervisors; in the others, Boston, Buffalo, Cleveland, New York City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis, they are kindergarten supervisors only. Chicago has no kindergarten supervision.

The standards of preparation have evidently been raised in recent years. Of the 100 kindergarten-primary supervisors, 74 report having had both kindergarten and primary training. Of the entire group, 41 have college degrees; 16 of these hold masters' degrees also.

PROBLEMS THAT NEED SOLUTION

The supervisors who recognize the unification of the kindergarten and primary grades as a means to the increased efficiency of the school have worked for the solution of definite problems. One of these has been the bringing of both the kindergarten and primary rooms up to the standards required by modern educational ideals. In this respect the kindergarten rooms have frequently had the advantage over the primary rooms in the matter of play and work space, and it has been the latter that have needed the greater attention. In the new buildings now in construction the need of adequate play space and equipment for young children is recognized and

met. Many rooms in old buildings lack these conveniences, but many of such rooms have been improved or play space has been found elsewhere. The kindergarten rooms are usually provided with cupboards and closets in which to keep the material, but with the adoption of the more active types of work the primary rooms need these also. One of the improvements made in these is to make the closet shelves low enough in both types of rooms so that the children themselves can get and put away the material.

The idea of continuity of progress from the kindergarten on has also brought about many changes in the furniture. In this respect, also, the greater changes are likely to be needed in the primary rooms, since the kindergarten has always had movable tables and chairs. The games, dramatizations, and construction work that now constitute a part of the early grade work make movable furniture essential in these grades also, and this has already replaced the stationary seats and desks in many places.

The progressive development of children's ability to use material of different kinds implies a reorganization of the materials used in both kindergarten and primary rooms. Much of the traditional kindergarten material, such as the pricking and sewing cards, the fine weaving mats, etc., are not now approved because of the strain on children's eyes and small muscles. These have been discarded, and other materials, such as small beads, sticks, and blocks, have been replaced by larger material of the same kind. Many new and larger types of building blocks have been devised, and in working out projects the smaller blocks, pegs, and beads can be used. With these changes the equipment and work of the kindergarten can be made to prepare children for the definite art work in the grades. Some differentiation, however, must be made in view of the development of the children's interest and power to use material. Beads and peg boards, for example, have an interest for the youngest kindergarten children but practically none for the children in the primary grades. This reorganization of the play equipment has already been effected in many places and is in process in many others. In the changes suggested and made in the furniture and equipment of the primary rooms in particular much credit is due the National Council of Primary Education.

The fact that these changes are well under way is shown in the replies to a questionnaire on certain phases of kindergarten supervision recently sent out by the bureau for compilation later. The point of this questionnaire was to determine the degree of responsibility in such matters as the planning and equipment of new rooms, the organizing of the curriculum, and related items. Replies were received from 89 of the 159 supervisors. Of these, 15 reported having from 75 to 100 per cent responsibility in the planning of new

kindergarten rooms; a large number that they had some voice in the matter; and only 14 that they had none at all. In some of these replies the explanation was made that this meant that their suggestions were asked for by school principals, superintendents, and architects, and these were carried out if possible. The replies to the questions concerning the purchase of supplies, the organization of work of the kindergarten and primary in relation to each other, and the development of the curriculum were of the same tenor. Indirectly they indicated that strategic work is in process and that it is being done with a fine spirit of cooperation between teachers, supervisors, and school executives.

PROBLEMS OF CLASSIFICATION AND PROMOTION

One of the important problems of the kindergarten-primary supervisor is the prevention of failures on the part of the children and thereby the prevention of "repeaters" often found in such large numbers in the primary grades. One of the main causes of these failures is that children have been classified and promoted on the basis of their chronological age instead of on the basis of their mental maturity as shown by psychological tests. The use of these tests is one of the forward steps in the organization of the school. If the failures due to wrong classification are to be avoided it is evident that children's mental ability should be tested early—at their entrance to the school. Tests for that purpose have been increasingly used with children in the grades, but with the exception of the Binet-Simon tests and the revisions of these, few of those in common use were adapted to children of kindergarten age. Within the past two years, however, several tests suitable for use with kindergarten children have been devised. Among these are the Detroit kindergarten tests and the Pintner-Cunningham tests, both of which are proving very serviceable. It has, therefore, become possible to classify and promote kindergarten children on a scientific basis.

In order to determine to what extent, if any, such tests are used in determining the classification and promotion of kindergarten children, an inquiry covering this subject was sent out during the past year. To this inquiry 95 people replied. Of these, 51 reported that they were using tests in a greater or less degree. The tests used are mainly the Detroit, the Pintner-Cunningham, and the Binet-Simon, or Stanford revision of the Binet test. According to the reports, the tests are used mainly for two purposes: (1) To determine children's readiness for promotion to the first grade and their classification into groups; and (2) to determine what to do with individual children of special types—those who are capable

of doing first-grade work but are below the entering age, those who have reached the promotion age but are below it from the standpoint of ability, and those whose promotion is doubtful for other reasons.

Much would be gained if children were tested on entering kindergarten, physically as well as mentally. An experiment in this direction was made in New York City in 1922 by the New York Chapter of the American Red Cross. The testing of more than 1,000 children is described in a booklet entitled "The Examination of Pre-School Age Children." This was issued by the health service of the organization named.

The testing of kindergarten children is practically a development of the past two years. Fewer than one-third of the cities having kindergarten supervision replied, it is true, and in many cases the use of tests is still limited, but the fact that they are in successful use in so many cities will stimulate their use in others. As the use of tests for determining children's ability in the primary grades is already established, their use in the kindergarten is needed in order that the children who attend it may be more fully prepared for successful work later on.

UNIFICATION OF THE KINDERGARTEN AND PRIMARY CURRICULUM

The complete adjustment of the kindergarten to the school is shown in the unified kindergarten-primary curriculum, which is the product of the past few years. This also has been a matter of progressive development. In the early years of the movement the kindergarten teacher had her outline of work or "program" and the primary teacher her course of study. Both were little more than statements of things to be done or subjects to be taught during a given period. Both were equally formal. The change in educational objectives during the past few years, with the broadening of the elementary curriculum and the changes in method which this entailed, has called a new type of curriculum into existence. With a clearer understanding of the new educational ideals and their implications for the work of the early years the essential unity of the aims and methods of the kindergarten and primary grades became apparent, and the new courses of study gave evidence of this. In 1920 the State of New Jersey published a "Manual for Kindergarten Teachers," which was, in effect, a kindergarten-primary manual in its emphasis upon the unity of the two. In 1922 the Bureau of Education published a kindergarten-first-grade curriculum to indicate how the primary teacher should utilize the work of the kindergarten as shown in the kindergarten curriculum published by the bureau in

1919. Since that time several cities have issued courses of study in which the kindergarten is recognized as the first stage in a complete school system.

III. PROGRESS IN THE TRAINING OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

In the training of kindergarten teachers the progress has been especially marked during the years from 1922-1924. This is shown by the organization of kindergarten training departments in institutions that have not had them before; the movement for the lengthening of existing courses; the reorganization of the separate kindergarten and primary courses into unified kindergarten-primary courses, and the organization of graduate courses for teachers in service. In the past two or three years kindergarten departments or courses have been organized in the City Normal School, Atlanta, Ga.; Cotner College, Bethany, Nebr.; Ashley Hall, Charleston, S. C.; the State Normal Schools of Danbury and New Haven, Conn.; and the Maryland State Normal School, Towson. In this latter case the State of Maryland took over the Baltimore City Teachers Training School, which included a kindergarten department. Emory University, Atlanta, Ga., gave kindergarten courses in its summer session in 1924, and efforts looking to the creation of a kindergarten department as a part of its school of education are in progress. The total number of institutions that give kindergarten training courses is now 155. Of these, 79 are supported by States, 25 by cities, and the remaining 54 by private funds. In addition to these a few institutions give a brief general course in kindergarten education for the purpose of giving all students a general idea of the aims and methods of the kindergarten. There are also 15 or 20 that have kindergartens as a part of the demonstration school and use them for observation work in the methods courses.

LENGTHENING THE KINDERGARTEN TRAINING COURSES

The movement for the lengthening of all teacher-training courses included the kindergarten courses also. This effort was led in large part by the State institutions, and in 1921 the legislatures of several States empowered the normal schools in these States to give courses of more than two years in length and to grant degrees to those completing prescribed four-year courses. The States in this group having publicly supported kindergarten training schools or departments are California, Colorado, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia. These States include 40 institutions that give such training, and in those therefore the more adequate courses may be given. Thus far, however, but two States have increased their graduation

requirements. All the courses in the California State teachers colleges have been increased to two and one-half years, and all those in the State teacher-training institutions in New York have been increased to three. Many other institutions, both public and private, are offering additional courses or summer courses of advanced character for which credit toward a degree is given. A few institutions are giving four-year courses. The course at Wellesley College is a graduate course and therefore requires more than four years. The course leading to a degree in the University of Cincinnati is a five-year course.

GRADUATE COURSES FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

The recent changes in the aims and methods of elementary education have created a need on the part of teachers in service for courses in the application of the new ideas to the daily schoolroom procedure. In order to meet this need many cities have organized extension courses for the several groups of teachers. These are sometimes optional, but more frequently required. Since the changes in the materials and methods of the kindergarten are very marked, courses in kindergarten education are usually included. These usually deal with the newer aspects, such as the use of the new materials, the new methods of recording children's progress, mental measurements, and the unification of the kindergarten and first grade. Such courses are being given in a number of the large cities—Cleveland and Detroit, under the auspices of their respective colleges of education; Baltimore, under the direction of the educational department of Johns Hopkins University; and Cincinnati, under the auspices of the University of Cincinnati.

Closely related to such courses in purpose and character are those given during the summer sessions of State normal schools and teachers colleges and private institutions. Among the State institutions kindergarten courses are given in many of those that give such courses during the year. The number of private institutions that give summer work is comparatively small. The teachers who attend these summer schools are likely to be of varying degrees of experience and to have varied needs. In consequence, varied courses are offered. Like those taking the city extension courses, these teachers wish for credits that will contribute to the securing of promotions or salary increases or that will count toward a degree. The number of teachers who attend summer sessions is astonishingly large, perhaps not fewer than 250,000. This attendance was required in many cases to enable teachers to meet the new professional qualifications that the States had set. Thousands of others attended of their own volition, because they wished to improve their preparation. Among these were many kindergarten teachers.

The offering of advanced courses in kindergarten education and the granting of degrees in that subject have contributed very materially to the progress of the kindergarten movement. Much of the kindergarten training in the past has dealt with the kindergarten only, and thereby prevented the kindergarten graduate from doing the best work because she did not see her own work as a part of the whole educational process. This condition could be remedied only by broadening the training teacher's preparation. That this broadening is in progress is shown by the replies to an inquiry sent out in 1924 asking for the names of the kindergarten instructors in the order of their rank and the degrees, if any, held by each. Replies were received from all but 10. They show that a remarkable advance in scholarship has been made in this group in the past few years. They show that 71 of the heads of the 145 kindergarten training institutions or departments that replied hold college degrees and that a corresponding number of the instructors in the kindergarten subjects in these institutions hold degrees also. Of the entire group, 51 hold master's degrees also, 2 hold doctor's degrees, and 1 the degree of doctor of laws. This progress is cumulative, like that in several other lines, and can not be measured by special years, but those who are familiar with the development of kindergarten training know how great an advance it is.

KINDERGARTEN-PRIMARY COURSES A STEP FORWARD

This larger scholarship on the part of training teachers has been one of the factors in the organization of combined kindergarten-primary courses to supersede the separate kindergarten and primary courses. The lack of unity between the work of the kindergarten and that of the grades has been due in no small degree to the differences in the training of kindergarten and primary teachers. Each may have been good of its kind, but the basis for unity was lacking when prospective kindergarten teachers were instructed in the work of the kindergarten only, and primary teachers in that of the grades only. In consequence neither saw her own work in its right relation to that of the other, since neither saw it as a part of a continuous whole. With a larger knowledge of the child's development on the part of both and a type of training that covers both the kindergarten and the primary grades, a secure foundation is laid for the continuity essential to real progress.

The organization of such courses has been a matter of progressive development. A few have been in existence for a number of years, but the majority have been organized within the past five years. In Pennsylvania the curricula of all the State normal schools were reorganized in 1921 so that each school would have four types, each

of which would prepare for a definite type of work. A kindergarten-primary course was one of the four. Action of the same general character was taken by several other States—California, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, and perhaps others.

A study made in 1923 of the catalogues of more than 100 institutions that give such courses showed that considerable experimentation will be necessary to make these courses serve the purposes for which they came into existence. If the idea that underlies the course is carried out, the work should cover the four to eight year period, i. e., that of the kindergarten and the first and second grades. It is therefore evident that there should be a fair balance between the time devoted to the work of the children of kindergarten age and those of the primary age. In this respect, however, the courses are still far apart. A number of these, those in the State normal schools and teachers colleges in particular, devote relatively little time to the work for kindergarten children and the major part of it to the grade work. In the private kindergarten training institutions one is likely to find the emphasis on the kindergarten side and but a small amount of time devoted to the primary work.

In consequence, the first ones are in effect primary courses with a slight kindergarten flavor, and the second kindergarten courses with a slight primary flavor. This is doubtless due to the fact that the majority of graduates of the first-named institutions will teach in the primary grades and the majority of those in the second in kindergartens. This may be true, but it is evident that such courses are kindergarten-primary courses in name rather than in fact. The real purpose of such a course should be the preparation of teachers capable of teaching either kindergarten or primary work, or both. Unless this purpose is carried out the preparation of either the kindergarten or primary teacher will be inadequate. In a course in which the emphasis is on the primary side the training of the prospective kindergarten teacher will be weak, and in one in which the emphasis is on the kindergarten the prospective primary teacher will lack adequate training. As a result the work with the children will lack the continuity that it should have during the six to eight year period. A balance between the time devoted to the work of one type and that of the other is therefore essential if a kindergarten-primary course is to be true to its name. The organization of such courses is a step forward, but much remains to be done to make the progress real.

The study referred to was a response to many requests for information and suggestions as to the organization of kindergarten-primary courses, and it has therefore been issued as a Bureau of Education bulletin, entitled "An Evaluation of Kindergarten-

Primary Courses in Teacher-Training Institutions." This contains suggestions as to the means of improving the courses in order that they may accomplish their ultimate purpose—the strengthening of the beginnings of education by a more complete unification of the kindergarten and primary grades.

IV. PROGRESS IN KINDERGARTEN LEGISLATION

In the matter of kindergarten legislation there has been reasonably good progress. Two kindergarten laws were enacted in 1923. The first of these was in New Mexico, which up to that date had no kindergarten law. The second was in Illinois, which, in the same year, amended its permissive law by adding a mandatory-on-petition feature. The two laws are as follows:

New Mexico kindergarten law.—SECTION 1425. New Mexico School Code, 1923: Any school in a district having 200 or more pupils in average daily attendance shall have power to establish and maintain, through their governing authorities, kindergartens for the instruction of resident children of the district between 4 and 6 years of age, the cost thereof to be included in the budget allowance of the district and paid from tax proceeds as other maintenance expenses are paid. The State board of education shall have the power to prescribe the course of training, study, and discipline for said kindergartens. No person shall teach kindergarten schools without a diploma from a reputable kindergarten teacher's institute or without passing an examination in kindergarten work prescribed by the State board of education.

*Illinois kindergarten law.*¹—SECTION 115. The board of school directors shall be clothed with the following powers: * * *

Sixteenth. To establish kindergartens for the instruction of children between the ages of 4 and 6 years, if, in their judgment, the public interest requires it, and to pay the necessary expenses of the same out of the school funds of the district. Upon petition of a majority of the parents or guardians of children between the ages of 4 and 6 residing within any school district where such kindergarten is proposed to be established, the board of directors shall, if funds are available, establish a kindergarten in connection with the public school designated in the petition, and shall maintain such kindergarten as long as the annual average daily attendance therein is not less than 15: *And provided further*, That such petition must be signed by at least 50 persons living within 1 mile of said public school who are parents or guardians of one or more children between the ages of 4 and 6. No one shall be employed to teach in a kindergarten who does not hold a kindergarten certificate as provided by law.

There are now but four States that have not yet adopted kindergarten laws, viz, Arkansas, Georgia, Maryland, and Mississippi. In four others, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, kindergartens may be established without legislation for that purpose because of the low age for school entrance.

¹ The School Law of Illinois. Circular No. 173. Issued by superintendent of public instruction. 1923. P. 22. Act approved June 20, 1923.

INFORMATION ABOUT KINDERGARTEN LAWS NOW AVAILABLE

One of the difficulties in securing the enactment of kindergarten laws, or the improvement of existing ones, has been that information about these laws and the respects in which they need improvement has been difficult to obtain. Bills have failed of passage because they did not show an acquaintance with the needs and conditions in a given State. To acquaint those interested in kindergarten progress with kindergarten legislation has been one of the needs of this biennium. This information can now be had. An article on kindergarten laws and the points in which those of the different States need improvement was published in the November, 1924, issue of *School Life*, an official publication of the Bureau of Education; and a bulletin entitled "Kindergarten Legislation" has just been issued. The bureau also has a mimeographed circular entitled "Suggestions Concerning Kindergarten Legislation," which can be procured free of charge.

V. NEW KINDERGARTEN LITERATURE

The number of books, bulletins, and circulars concerning the kindergarten and of value to it written during the period from 1922-1924 furnishes additional evidence of the progress of the kindergarten movement. Books on the kindergarten and the conception of education that it illustrates are not lacking, but many of these that have been written belong to an earlier period and do not meet present-day problems. A new type of literature is therefore needed, and the books of the past two years are of the kind to meet the new need.

The first kindergarten books in this country were the works of Froebel, or the translations of these, and the interpretations of their message by William N. Hailman, Susan E. Blow, James L. Hughes, and Denton J. Snider. These constituted a distinct contribution to the literature of American education, and some years later they were followed by a number of books of a different type. Among them were "Children's Rights" and "Kindergarten Principles and Practice," by Kate Douglas Wiggin and her sister, Nora A. Smith; "A Study of Child Nature" and others, by Elizabeth Harrison; and "Love and Law in Child Training," by Emelie Poulsson. The main purpose of these books was to acquaint the public, and mothers in particular, with the kindergarten as an institution and the principles that underlie its procedure. These also had a place in the educational literature of the period.

The better knowledge of the child's development, which recent years have made available, has shown the need of many changes in the curriculum and methods of the schools, the kindergartens included. The grades needed a curriculum broadened to include games

and play for the development of the child's body, experiment and construction for the acquisition of skill, and literature and music for the cultivation of the higher interests. They also needed methods that would allow initiative and self-expression on the part of the children. The kindergarten had games, handwork, song, and story-telling from the beginning, but its play material was open to criticism from the standpoint of size and organization and the methods of using these. Both kindergarten and primary grades, therefore, needed changes in material and methods, although in different lines. In consequence experimentation and adjustment were needed in both kindergarten and grades, separately, and in their relation to each other. The fact that such experimentation was in progress made those who were engaged in it hesitate to publish any conclusions they might draw, knowing that these might be tentative only. This is one reason why so few books on the kindergarten have been written in recent years. Many reports of studies and experiments have been made, some of which have been published in periodicals from time to time. But few of these have been put into permanent form and have not therefore been generally available. The studies entitled "Experimental Studies in Kindergarten Theory and Practice," made by a group of Teachers College specialists of Columbia University, were put into available form, however, and have been helpful and stimulating to other experimenters. The period of experimentation is by no means over, but the principles that are to guide the practice of the future have become fairly clear. As a result, a new educational literature is appearing in all phases of education. The several books that have been written about the kindergarten during the past two years represent the new educational ideals and practice and are therefore greatly needed.

These books may be divided into groups according to the problems with which they deal. The first three deal with current problems of curriculum and method and are therefore grouped together. The first one is "A Conduct Curriculum for the Kindergarten and First Grade." This was directed by Patty Smith Hill and compiled by a group of kindergarten and first-grade teachers from the Horace Mann School. This book is significant, in part because it is the first of a series of monographs on childhood education, and also because it stresses character training as the main objective in the work with young children. It shows how subject matter and method may be organized to that end.

The second of these books, in the order of publication, was "Early Childhood Education," by Lalla H. Pickett, director of the training school, and Duralde Boren, kindergarten director of the East Texas State Normal College, Commerce, Tex. It discusses the underlying principles of education for early childhood, the materials to be

used, and the curriculum of both kindergarten and first grade from the new standpoint. It illustrates the work of these by descriptions of typical days in each.

The third book, entitled "Unified Kindergarten and First-Grade Teaching," was written by S. Chester Parker and Alice Temple, both of the School of Education, University of Chicago. This book traces the history of the effort to unify the kindergarten and the first grade, shows the objectives in a unified program, the psychological organization of the curriculum, and the daily progress.

Closely related to the foregoing, in meeting a current need, is "A Practical Handbook for Students in Observation, Participation, and Teaching in Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third Grades." This book was compiled for use in teacher-training classes by Winifred E. Bain, Gertrude Burns, and Eva Jane Van Sistine, graduate students of the University of Chicago.

The other works on the kindergarten written during this biennium do not constitute a homogeneous group like those already mentioned but are valuable in meeting other needs. One of them is "A Beginner's Book in Religion," by Edna Dean Baker, of the National Kindergarten and Elementary College, Chicago, Ill. This book is practically a manual of suggestions for carrying on a Sunday-school kindergarten, on the basis of present-day educational and religious thought, but is equally valuable for the home.

Another book, "The Unseen Side of the Child's Life," by Elizabeth Harrison, is the third treatise of a trio by the same author and is marked by the same insight into child life that characterizes her other works.

A third book is "Spontaneous and Supervised Play in Childhood," by Alice Corbin Sies, formerly assistant professor of childhood education, University of Pittsburgh, and supervisor of playgrounds for small children, city of Pittsburgh. It is a study of the outdoor play of young children that has many suggestions for both kindergarten and primary teachers.

A book entitled "Parenthood and Child Nurture," by Edna Dean Baker, of the National Kindergarten and Elementary College, will have a great value for parents who wish to know the fundamental facts of their children's development and the methods of utilizing the facts so as to get the best results.

"Children's Drawings," edited and compiled by Stella Agnes McCarty, Goucher College, Baltimore, Md., contains many suggestions for teachers of young children. This study represents the purposing, planning, and collective labors of the child-study committee of the International Kindergarten Union for three years.

The books, "Pioneers of the Kindergarten in America" and "My Garden of Memories," constitute a notable contribution to the

history of the kindergarten movement. The first consists of sketches of the early leaders and was prepared by a committee of the International Kindergarten Union. The second is the autobiography of Kate Douglas Wiggin, who was herself one of the kindergarten pioneers.

The foregoing list would not be complete if it did not mention two books, each of which has a chapter on the kindergarten. The first is "The Preschool Child," by Arnold Gesell, M. D., director of Yale psycho-clinic and professor of child hygiene, Yale University. In this work Doctor Gesell characterizes the kindergarten as "the vestibule of our vast public-school system" and points out the responsibilities that devolve upon it because of its strategic position. This is a work of special significance in view of the present interest in the preschool-child. The second book, "The Primary School," by Annie E. Moore, Teachers College, Columbia University, deals with the problems of the primary grades as a whole. The chapter on the kindergarten touches upon its history as a part of the school and its increasing adjustment to the school as a whole.

The literature of the kindergarten has been augmented also from other sources. In September, 1924, a new kindergarten periodical was launched, entitled "Childhood Education," which is the organ of the International Kindergarten Union. A monograph entitled "General Practice in Kindergarten Education in the United States" has been issued by the National Education Association. This is by Mary Dabney Davis, in cooperation with the research committee of the department of kindergarten education of that organization. The educational periodicals have published some 20 articles on the subject and the National Kindergarten Association several leaflets and circulars. The Bureau of Education has published 12 bulletins and circulars on different phases of kindergarten work. Those bearing on the training of kindergarten teachers and on kindergarten legislation have already been mentioned. Among the others are Circular No. 9, "How the Kindergarten Makes Americans," by Earl Barnes; Circular No. 13, "Prefirst-grade Training," by William T. Root; and No. 17, "How the Kindergarten Aids Children's Progress in the Grades."

VI. NEW LINES OF EFFORT

KINDERGARTENS IN CONSOLIDATED RURAL SCHOOLS

The fact that the number of children enrolled in kindergartens constitute but a small proportion of the children of kindergarten age in the country at large has been stated elsewhere. The outstanding reason for this is that nearly 50 per cent of the children in the

country at large live in small rural communities or the open country. Of these children, thousands have had no educational advantages except those which the one-room rural school affords. It is for the purpose of providing educational facilities, comparable in some degree to those of city children, that the consolidated rural school has come into existence. There is no reason why such schools should not include kindergartens or kindergarten-primary departments in which the needs of children from 4 to 6 years of age could be met. The movement for the consolidation of rural schools is still new, however, and has difficulties of its own to meet. It is not, therefore, surprising that only a few of these schools have yet included kindergartens. Several have been established, however—one or more in each of the States of Connecticut, Florida, Michigan, Ohio, and Iowa. The last-named State seems to have taken the lead in the matter, as its school directory for 1923-24 shows kindergartens to have been established in 18 consolidated schools in 15 counties. Of these, 10 are in communities of fewer than 1,000 inhabitants. In one of them the population is only 150.

The fact that kindergartens have been organized in the schools of these widely scattered villages implies an increasing recognition of the needs of children from 4 to 6 years of age, rural as well as urban, that only the kindergarten can truly meet. Rural life may and often does contribute much to a little child's development—in the contact with nature that it affords and the opportunities for play that it provides. The facts of nature need to be interpreted to children, however, if they are to become truly significant. In many schools these facts are given no place on the program, and the children see no connection between the trees, flowers, or sunset within their vision and the story of these as told in poem or picture. The farm affords companionship for the little child, that of parents, brothers, and sisters, and even that of the animals, but it seldom affords the opportunity for that most valuable type of play, that with children of his own age. In this play children need the guidance of an adult, just as they need direction in their nature observation and other activities. The guidance of children's interests and activities into worth-while channels is the specific work of the kindergarten. For the sake of children's fullest development and their greater happiness it is therefore hoped that the number of kindergartens in the consolidated schools may increase.

The needs of children of preschool age are at present in the focus of public attention. The establishing of kindergartens in such schools would furnish one way in which that interest could function for the benefit of the rural children. This movement originated

during the present biennium. It was at the Boston meeting of the National Education Association in 1922 that the first public address on the subject was given by Mrs. Katharine M. Cook, chief of the Rural Division of the U. S. Bureau of Education. It was during the same year that a circular was issued on the subject, entitled "Principles in the Consolidated Rural School." This is Bureau of Education Rural School Leaflet No. 18, written by Mrs. Cook.

THE NURSERY-SCHOOL MOVEMENT

The nursery-school movement is one of great significance for early elementary education, since some of these schools are serving as laboratories for securing more adequate knowledge of young children's development. This movement is new in the United States. A few such schools were organized several years ago, that in the Waldin School, New York City, in 1915; in the Bureau of Educational Experiments in 1919; and in the Merrill-Palmer School, Detroit, in 1920. The movement received a great impetus in 1922 from a course of lectures on the subject given by Miss Grace Owen, one of the leaders of the movement in England, who had been brought to the United States by Teachers College for that purpose. One of the New York day nurseries was used as a demonstration school to illustrate the character of nursery school work. During the same year the Ruggles Street Day Nursery, of Boston, was made into a nursery school. Since that time nursery schools have been organized in several cities. Just how many could not be learned, since many of the 600 day nurseries in the country have adopted the name, sometimes without justification. Day nurseries as such are philanthropic in character, and as a rule lack the scientific and educational aspects that characterize the true nursery school. As far as could be learned, about 25 real nursery schools have been organized in 16 different cities. They are as follows: Boston, Cambridge, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Highland Park, Los Angeles, Missoula, Montclair, New Haven, New York, Philadelphia, Pocatello, Schenectady, and Washington, D. C.

These nursery schools are of different types and serve different purposes. Some are practically underage kindergartens, often in public schools. Although it may not be possible to provide all the nursery-school features under these conditions, the children have clean and wholesome rooms, opportunities for play and handwork, usually under the guidance of a trained kindergarten teacher, and medical inspection such as that given the older pupils. Whether the session is for a half day or the whole day, and whether sleeping facilities are provided, depends on the conditions. In some cases the

work is so organized as to include instruction to the mothers. Kindergartens of this kind are to be found in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Washington, D. C., and several other cities.

Of a different type are the neighborhood cooperative nursery schools that have been established in several cities. As a rule these are organized and carried on by a committee of parents, under the guidance of or in cooperation with an expert in child care and training. Nursery schools of this type often serve as a laboratory for the mothers in a scientific study of the development of their own and their neighbors' children. It is in this type of work that the American Association of University Women is rendering a great service. The cooperation is of different types, sometimes financial and sometimes educational. The University Cooperative Nursery School of Chicago is conducted by the University Cooperative Nursery School Association, the university providing the room. In Missoula, Mont., the cooperation is between the parents of the children, the University of Montana, and the American Association of University Women. This organization has been instrumental in organizing 19 nursery schools of this type and 99 preschool study clubs. The participation of this organization in work of this type is very new, the resolution to do so having been made at the national meeting of 1923. The funds for this work are contributed by the Laura Spelman Memorial Fund.

The nursery schools of the types described doubtless contribute to the scientific training of a considerable number of parents, but this is but one of the purposes that the nursery school serves. One of these is the training of nursery school teachers. Since adequately trained teachers are essential to the progress of the movement, several institutions have organized courses and training facilities in these lines.

As far as known the institutions giving such training are the Merrill-Palmer School, Detroit; Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City; the Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center, Boston; the Cleveland Kindergarten Training School, Cleveland; Temple University, Philadelphia; and Southern Branch of the University of California, Los Angeles. It is evident that training for nursery school work must be based upon first-hand knowledge of children, and for this the nursery school furnishes one of the opportunities. The content of the courses must follow the lines in which knowledge is most needed. Most of the courses are still in the experimental stage, however, and need not be discussed here.

A number of nursery schools are serving as research centers for still another end. This is the securing of data concerning children's development in specific lines, for use as the knowledge of it may be

needed, or for the formulating of general principles for the guidance of educational procedure. Very valuable work has been done in these and related lines in the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, the Yale Psycho-Clinic, and the Bureau of Educational Experiments in New York City. Such books as Doctor Gesell's "Preschool Child," Baldwin and Stecker's "Psychology of the Preschool Child," and Johnson's "A Nursery School Experiment" are the results of such experiments and of great value to all students of childhood.

○